

George P. Isbell Residence  
226 King William Street  
San Antonio, Bexar County  
Texas

HABS No. TEX-3147

HABS  
TEX.  
15- SANT  
22-

PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
Western Office, Division of Design and Construction  
1000 Geary Street  
San Francisco, California

PHOTOGRAPH-DATA BOOK REPORT  
HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

TEX-3147

Page 1

GEORGE P. ISBELL RESIDENCE

San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas

ADDRESS: 226 King William Street  
OWNER: Mr. and Mrs. George P. Isbell  
OCCUPANT: Mr. and Mrs. George P. Isbell  
USE: Private Residence  
ARCHITECT &  
BUILDER Mr. Altgelt (Ernst Altgelt)

HISTORICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

Stone residence of rough hewn and rough squared limestone, built by Mr. Altgelt, a prosperous real estate developer of a fashionable residential area in 1878.

HISTORICAL INFORMATION

Mr. Altgelt, an enterprising personality was a member of a well-born German family. In addition to establishing the townsite of Comfort, he was the original developer of King William Street ("Saurkraut Bend") residential area, where most of the prominent families of German origin built their homes, and lived until recently. Mr. Altgelt originally owned the entire block, bordered by King William, Beauregard, Madison, and Turner Streets. The Altgelt family is still prominent in business and social circles in San Antonio.

The house is an excellent example of restrained Victorian. Although built in the Victorian Period, much of the architectural detail reflects the Classic influence.

This house, the second house on this property, was built in 1878; but before it was finished Mr. Altgelt's health caused the family to move to "Wassenberg", their country home near Boerne, in Kendall County.

Mr. Altgelt died, and Mrs. Altgelt did not want to move into the new house, just being finished, and returned to "Wassenberg" to live. The house was rented to the Groos family for one year.

In 1879-80, Mrs. Altgelt sold the house to the Theodor Schleuning family, and they and their descendants occupied it until 1944.

The George P. Isbells purchased the house from Harry Martin, husband of a Schleuning granddaughter, in 1944, and have owned and occupied it since then.

#### Alterations and Additions:

The Schleuning family introduced interior plumbing, and built an extraneous rear addition to house a bath room on both floors. Other changes, such as removal of the porte-cochere, were minor in nature. When the George Isbells acquired the house in 1944, interior changes to make the structure more adaptable to modern living were made, but with little, if any, loss of original charm. An interior stairway to the second floor, fashioned after a period model, was added between living room and dining room. Toilet facilities and a new kitchen were provided on the lower floor, the latter in the extraneous earlier frame addition utilized as a bath room. On the second floor, baths, dressing rooms, and closets were added, or renovated, and a part of the veranda was screened for sleeping quarters. Where practical, double hung windows were replaced with easements. The original Classic back-band trim, picture moulding, and 10" high moulded wood base was continued in all new areas.

#### REFERENCES

- San Antonio, by Charles Ramsdell, p. 156, published by the University of Texas Press in 1959.  
Memoirs of Mrs. Ernst Altgelt, San Antonio Public Library, written longhand in German, and translated recently by Henry B. Dielmann, 200 Nottingham, San Antonio, Texas.  
Mrs. George P. (Martha Youngblood) Isbell, 226 King William Street, San Antonio, Texas.

TEX.  
15-5400  
20

TEX-3147  
Page 3

## ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

Architectural Character: Transitional - Classic to Victorian.

Condition of Fabric: Excellent.

## EXTERIOR

Overall Dimensions: 28' wide by 40' deep rectangle, two stories high. Projecting balcony over entrance stoop in front. 16' wide by 25' deep rectangle in rear. Two-story side porch or veranda, 8'-6" wide, swings around to open on all rooms; ceilings, 12'-10" on first floor, 11'-6" on second floor.

Foundations: Natural stone laid in lime mortar.

Wall Construction: 16" thick natural limestone; projecting stone lintels and voussoirs over openings.

Porch: Wood cornices, boxed wood columns with cap, neck mould, and base, exposed rafter wood ceilings, wood floors, wood baluster rail and turned spindles on second floor and up exterior stairway. Second story balcony with balustrade extends across front over entrance and window.

Chimneys and Fireplaces: Three fireplaces and wood mantels on first floor; flues concealed in 16" stone walls were provided with thimbles on second floor.

Doorways and Doors: 4-panel vertical, some with transoms; front doorway accented with glazed lunette and rope mould staff mould. Entrance door, 4-panel with raised mouldings and panels, wide lock rail and arched upper panels.

Windows: In-opening casements with movable wood shutters; splayed jambs; some replacements were 9/9 light, double hung.

Roof: Roof over house standing seam metal, pitched  $4\frac{1}{2}$  in 12, gabled in front and rear. Porch roof is flat, standing seam metal. Overhang and barge board at gable ends supported by outriggers with band sawn profile.

TEX-3147  
Page 4

Cornice: Ornamental rafter ends exposed approximately 1'-0" on house; boxed -in wood cornice on porch.

#### INTERIOR

Floor Plan: Living room, dining room, and kitchen on first floor; four bed rooms on second floor. All rooms opened on to side, two-story veranda.

Flooring: 1" x 5" yellow pine.

Wall and Ceiling Finish: Lime plaster on stone or wood lath.

Doors: 4-panel with vertical center stile.

Trim: Classic backband; base 10" high, picture mould 2'-0" from ceiling.

Partitions: Rough-sawn wood stud, measuring 6", finished.

Hardware: Rim lock with white porcelain knobs.

Lighting: Originally gas; now wired for electricity.

#### OUTBUILDINGS

There was a well, an attached porte-cochere, a carriage house and an outside summer kitchen, all of which are non-existent, except the well location, which has been maintained.

#### SITE

Setting: The house faces approximately northwest and is located in the block between Beauregard and Turner Streets.

Fence: At some later date, a natural stone wall, about 5'-6" high, with iron gates, was constructed around the entire property with stone salvaged from the Old Degen Brewery. (1961-62)

TEX.  
15-SANT  
22-

TEX-3147  
Page 5

Landscaping: The garden is planted in St. Augustine Carpet grass, flower beds and trees, and is well kept. Fountains, statuary, and other ornamental items have been erected in the garden.

Prepared by,

*Marvin Eickenroht*

Marvin Eickenroht, AIA,  
Committeeman, Texas Region,  
American Institute of Architects,  
Committee on Preservation of  
Historic Buildings

September 1963

APPROVED: *Charles S Pope*  
Charles S. Pope, AIA  
Supervising Architect, Historic Structures  
Western Office, Design and Construction  
National Park Service

DATE: *October 16, 1963*